

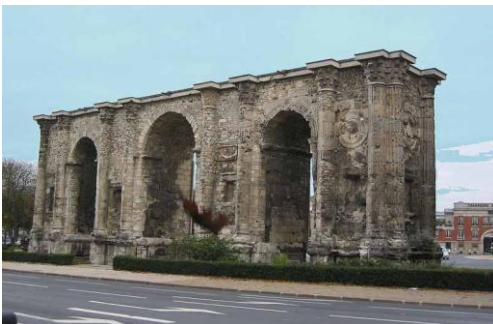
Reims/Rheims, France



The Cathedral of Reims

Reims was the capital of the Remi tribe of Gauls until its capture ca. 80 BC by the Romans, who renamed it Durocortorum. Christianity, predominately Arian, was established in the third century, and by this time the name of Reims seems to have been used with the founding of the Diocese of Reims. In 406 the Vandals took the city, slaying Bishop Nicasius, and in 451 Attila the Hun descended upon Reims.

By 481 the Frankish king, Clovis I (c.466-511), founder of the Merovingian dynasty, had subdued most of the small Frankish kingdoms and made his capital at Paris. He had the support of the Armoricans (Alans, Gallo Romans, Britons) who aided him in eliminating Visigothic power in Gaul. In one great battle Clovis acquired most of Aquitaine. His power grew, but soon he would make Reims famous.



Roman Ruins at Reims: *Above:* Porte de Mars, triumphal arch. *Below:* The only surviving portion of the Roman Forum, now underground. (Jean-Pierre Riocreux)

From the 12th century Reims was the site of the coronations of the kings of France. A politically designed coronation was that of Charles VII in 1429. According to legend, Joan of Arc thought this would symbolize France's determination to regain territories held by the English. The original cathedral was burned in 1210. Reims and its cathedral were severely damaged in World Wars I and II, but were rebuilt and remain tourist attractions. Today, the cathedral's nave is longer than that of Chartres.

The Douay-Rheims version of the Bible was a project of English Catholic scholars working at the University of Douay, France. In 1582 their English Catholic New Testament was published at Reims.

A Baptism that Protected the English Church from the Arian Heresy*



By 481 Clovis I (c.466-511), founder of the Merovingian dynasty, had subdued most of the small Frankish kingdoms and made the capital of his kingdom at Paris.

In 492/483 he married Clotilde, a Burgundian princess and a Catholic. Queen Clotilde, urged her pagan husband to convert to Catholic, not Arian, Christianity. It was not an easy task, but one that was won by tears and prayers. St. Remegius baptized Clovis on Christmas day, 496, in a little church in Reims. Many of his followers were also baptized.

Thanks to the decision of Clovis, Europe, which was then predominately Arian, began to throw off the heresy, which, otherwise, could in time have affected Britain. The heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ, was condemned at the Council of Nicaea on 325.



Clovis died in 511 whereupon Clotilde entered the Abbey of St. Martin of Tours of which Alcuin, the English scholar who established Charlemagne's school, would become abbot almost 300 years later.

Gregory of Tours (c. 538-594) chronicled the life of Clovis in his *Historia Francorum*, Book II. Over the years many legends arose about Clovis and Clotilde.

Left: Above Baptism of Clovis by the Master of St. Giles, ca. 1500, and below detail of a statue of Clotilde from Notre Dame de Corbeil, 12th century.

A Heritage of Education

Reims survived invasions and conquerors and by the 10th century was known as an intellectual center with schools dedicated to the *trivium*, or classical liberal arts curricula. Credit must go to the founders: Archbishop Adalberin (969-988) and the monk Gerbert, who later became Pope Sylvester II. The URCA (University of Rheims Champagne-Ardenne, founded in 1548, serves some 18,000 students. The Institut d'Etudes politiques de Paris, the university for social and political sciences, opened an extension in Reims in 2010.

* The heresy taught by Arius (ca. 250–336 AD) in Alexandria Egypt, which denied the divinity of Christ. The First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD condemned the heresy.



Canterbury cathedral.
Since 1962, Reims and Canterbury, England are twin cities, promoting culture and commerce. This is similar to the sister-city programs between the United States and Europe.